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Labelling, (re)qualifying and disqualifying marginal spaces. The case of saffron in Taliouine (Anti-Atlas, Morocco)

Mari Oiry Varacca

Introduction: labelling and power relations

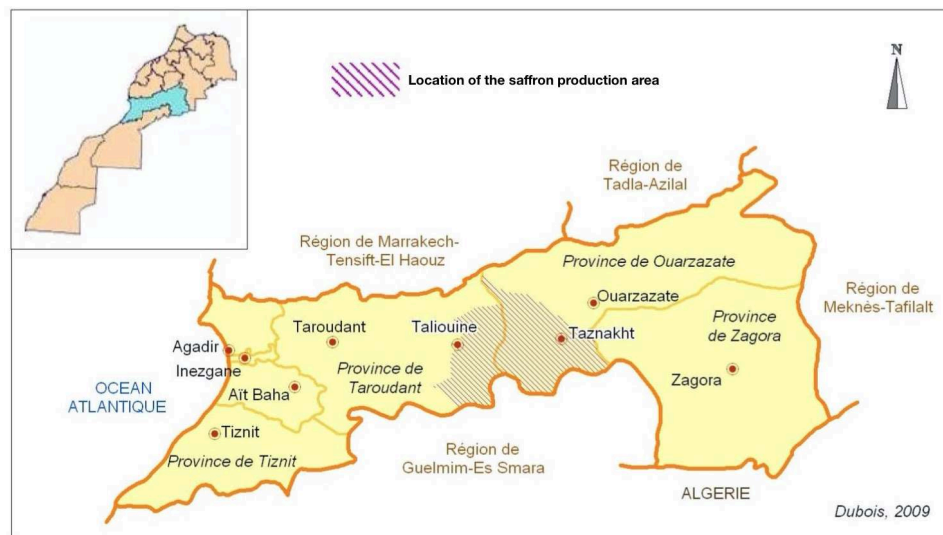
Promoting heritage in order to combat marginalisation

- 1 In mountain regions, labels for agricultural products have been popular for a long time. In Europe, the official identifiers of quality and territorial origin (such as PDO and PGI)¹ have been used in a context of agriculture's "deterritorialisation" since the 1950s (Rieutort, 2009): There has been an increase in crops using chemical inputs, the latter have become more specialised, and farmers have lost ownership of most of the value that actors downstream in the agrifood sector add to their crops. In response, the goal with labels is to highlight products whose origin and quality are identified and thereby to enhance production areas and the work of farmers. In a context of economic globalisation that exacerbates the disparities between mountain regions and accelerates the marginalisation of some of them (Perlik, 2015), mountain societies view the creation of heritage as a resource: Valuing objects and practices that are thought of and presented as being representative of a social group helps to combat this marginalisation. Thus, labels are a means of promoting a kind of crop whose specificity is tied to the territory and that, for this reason, cannot be produced elsewhere.
- 2 In the mountains of Morocco, which have been marginalised since the colonial era and by belated public policies that have not succeeded at countering the liberal economic system that plays a role in excluding them (Boujrouf, 1996), heritage is receiving an increasing amount of attention from a range of actors (from municipalities and

associations to private actors and regions) and enjoys institutional recognition. Since the mid-2000s, the number of “local products” has been on the rise: Pillar II of the Green Morocco Plan, which the Ministry of Agriculture adopted in 2009, encourages structuring farmers into cooperatives, labelling these products and promoting them to tourists. The Law on Distinctive Signs of Origin and Quality was adopted in 2008.² Mountain societies expect the labelling of their agricultural products to bring not only economic but also symbolic added value: Having such a label makes it possible to restore value to products, know-how and the collectives they represent and to single out particular areas (those that have been left behind compared with others) by recognising their qualities.

- 3 To see what is actually happening on the ground, it is worth analysing the case of the labelling of saffron in the Taliouine–Tazenakht region, which is located in the Anti-Atlas Mountains in southern Morocco (Figure 1). Away from the major urban and tourist centres (although it is located halfway between Agadir and Ouarzazate, it is far from either of the two cities and poorly connected to Marrakesh), the region has been neglected by the public authorities and is a land of emigration. The poverty rate is more than twice the rural average (Benhalima, 2009). Here, where the altitude varies between 1,000 and 3,000 metres and water is scarce, saffron has been cultivated for hundreds of years. Production amounts to about 5 tonnes annually, which makes Morocco one of the five largest producers in the world, and is estimated to affect 7,000 to 8,000 people (Migrations et développement, 2009). In 2010, the region obtained a protected designation of origin (PDO). This means that all of the product’s stages of production – from collecting the crocus pistils to drying them and packaging the final product (Figure 2) – must be carried out within the geographical area identified in the ministerial order, which covers the production region between Taliouine and Tazenakht.³ Does labelling make it possible to requalify this region? One study (Landel, Gagnol, Oiry, 2014)⁴ in the field of territorial economics focuses on the modalities of labelling in Taliouine. The critical approach that is chosen here, which is more attentive to the power relations at play in the labelling processes, aims to extend this previous study and complete the work in agronomy, economics and geography that has previously been carried out with respect to local products in Morocco (see, in particular, Berriane and Michon, 2016; Tekelioglu, Ilbert and Tozanli, 2009) and saffron, in particular (Aboudrare *et al.*, 2014; Dubois, 2010): The latter have made it possible to sketch an accurate picture of the stages and actors involved in the manufacturing and promotion of these products and to make suggestions for turning them into territorial resources. Studies that have been done on certain local products such as argan oil (Romagny and Boujrouf, 2010; Michon *et al.*, 2016) show that the actors benefitting most from a PGI – cooperatives or companies that process and sell the oil outside the production area – are not the local communities that have the know-how recognised by the label. The aim is to show, by using the case of saffron, that the PDO designation also leads to the dispossession of small local farmers and increases the levels of inequality between producers and between production areas.

Figure 1. Location of the saffron production area in the Souss-Massa-Drâa region



Dubois 2009, (in Dubois 2010, p. 10).

Figure 2. Freshly picked crocus waiting to be sorted (Tassousfi, October 2015)



Photo M. Oiry.

Issues of power and knowledge

- 4 Before obtaining a label, farmers need to adapt their products to meet the criteria laid out by the Moroccan authorities, who are supported by international partners providing reports, ideas and financial assistance. Is this a “top-down”

patrimonialisation (Skounti, 2010)?⁵ The Migrations et développement (MD)⁶ NGO played a central role in saffron's recovery phase.⁷ It encouraged saffron producers to form cooperatives, which, in turn, formed economic interest groups (EIGs) that made it possible to leverage subsidies and provide technical guidance. It organised the first saffron festival in 2007, which starts during the harvest at the end of October and enables professionals to meet. Finally, in collaboration with local associations, the NGO has built hostels to accommodate domestic and international tourists for stays up to several days, which helps with the sale of agricultural and craft products in the village cooperatives. MD, which has become an international solidarity NGO, enjoys the support of international organisations (reports, funds, marketing assistance). Since the early 2000s, public actors have been taking over. The Souss-Massa-Drâa region and the Regional Office of Agricultural Development of Ouarzazate (ORMVAO) are behind the push to label saffron. In January 2011, King Mohammed VI inaugurated the House of Saffron.⁸ More recently, Taliouine's saffron received support from the National Agency for the Development of Oasis and Argan Zones, which was created in 2011. Since 2013, it has been organising and financing the saffron festival. This product also benefits from the Minister of Agriculture's⁹ interest in its region of origin. At the same time, local associations have sought to tie the resource to the territory. Maroc inédit, a Moroccan association specialising in solidarity travel, coordinates between existing hostels. Nevertheless, the tourism stakeholders are struggling to coordinate their actions, as are the co-operators within cooperatives and EIGs. These local players have to work with the companies that produce, process and sell the saffron – in particular, in the pharmaceutical sector. Some of them, foreigners, are interested in the area. Thus, the power relations involve the public authorities and large companies on the one hand, and civil society and local farmers on the other hand. In the labelling processes, the different representations and types of knowledge in the territory affected by the labelling come into conflict with each other.

- 5 If we consider knowledge as a means of imposing power, by adopting a grid of interpretation inspired by the work of Michel Foucault, we can analyse the types of knowledge that are at play, the regimes of truth that drive them, the devices that impose them, on whom and by whom, and what this says about power relations in the particular society. In the case of the labelling of Taliouine saffron, what type of knowledge is justified in the labelling process, which actors dominate the process, and which types of knowledge are imposed to produce their dominant position? The work of Michel Foucault (2004) shows how liberalism and the market became central principles of government in the West at the end of the 18th century, how they were established as a system of truth to justify the imposition of knowledge and ways of interpreting the world by thinking and the changes in practices in a large number of fields governing the lives of individuals and societies. Therefore, it is worth looking into the types of agricultural knowledge that were and have been promoted in Morocco first in a colonial and then in a post-colonial context, during and since the period of the French Protectorate (1912–1956): “industrial” knowledge, as opposed to “traditional” knowledge, which has been neglected but is currently receiving a boost thanks to labels. Is such knowledge not more likely to bring products to the market that were previously only found at the margins, leading to a “reformatting” of the farming knowledge that underlies them according to world market standards set by public authorities and international partners? While Michel Foucault emphasises standards and the mechanisms to enforce them, Michel de Certeau (1980) focuses on the micro-

resistance to these standards in everyday life. He shows how ordinary people, far from being the mere passive “consumers” that the liberal economy would like them to be, navigate the gap in their daily use of objects and the standards imposed on them. Following his work, we will examine which tactics are deployed by ordinary players in the Moroccan mountains – that is, the small farmers – to “make do with” the constraints established by the institutions that grant the label, as well as the agricultural knowledge enacted through it, to better use them for their benefit and to fashion (*bricoler*)¹⁰ further knowledge: between “industrial” knowledge, “traditional” knowledge and knowledge inspired by agroecology. This will lead to relativising these categories, which in reality are more intertwined with than clearly distinguishable from each other.

- 6 This study of the social power relations that pervade the labelling process, as well as the role that knowledge plays in these relations, is used to look into the effect that obtaining a label has on mountain societies and spaces: Does labelling give (back) value to marginalised spaces or, on the contrary, disqualify certain spaces while excluding certain social groups? To find out who benefits from the label and which areas it covers, ethnographic methods (e.g. semi-structured and informal interviews with the stakeholders concerned, as well as direct observations on farms and in Taliouine during the saffron festival in 2011) were adopted during the many visits that have been made on a regular basis since 2010. In parallel, a corpus of reports from NGOs, international organisations, international cooperation agencies and public authorities concerning the saffron sector and its labelling was analysed.¹¹ The aim was to compare the point of view of the actors who support labelling and grant the label with that of farmers who do not have direct decision-making power, thereby gauging how the latter perceive the label.

From requalification to disqualification?

How the PDO label for saffron has incompletely requalified the Taliouine–Tazenakht territory

- 7 Obtaining the label has advantages for the whole region: All stages of making the product must take place in the region, which favours producers of Taliouine over producers from Ourika (Western High Atlas), a new production region. Overall, the quality has improved for members of cooperatives, although more work remains, for example in terms of the hygiene conditions required when sorting pistils, which is rarely done with gloves and caps (Figure 3). This has enabled cooperatives to conquer new markets at the national and the international levels. Tourists are increasingly confident in the products they can buy locally. They are able to purchase certified saffron at a standardised price at the House of Saffron (Figure 4) or in cooperatives. Labelling has made it possible for all producers, including those who are not members of cooperatives, to increase sales prices. The value created is also symbolic in nature: The label promotes a product that was not previously promoted, and the farmers are presented as holders of knowledge that make it possible to produce saffron.

Figure 3: Saffron crocus and pistils sorted at the Tassousfi cooperative, October 2015



Photo M. Oiry.

Figure 4. PDO-labelled saffron sold at the House of Saffron, Taliouine, October 2015



Photo M. Oiry.

- 8 However, the PDO designation has not made it possible to have an image of the territory that is truly more clear and solid. Producers struggle to take ownership of cooperatives and the House of Saffron and coordinate their actions with those of the tourism industry stakeholders: The saffron festival is not really a tourist event. Guides and managers of holiday cottages are finding it a challenge to link other local products (almonds, aromatic plants, etc.) and other heritage objects, such as collective granaries, with saffron so that saffron's image of quality is reflected in these objects. The authorities share responsibility for these difficulties: The municipality does not ensure that the dates for the saffron festival, which change every year, are set early enough, which means that tourists cannot organise in advance to attend. The House of Saffron was not designed to be a regional tourism organising hub.

Rise in social inequality

- 9 The PDO label seems to bring out social inequality. Indeed, it has little legitimacy on the international market. The most effective way to access it is to get Ecocert certification because the label is recognised at this level. Even on the domestic market, the wealthiest consumers place more trust in international labels than in national certifications. But only private companies or large producers can pay to have these labels (the certification process is financially onerous for the applicant, and the certificate is only granted for one year at a time). Moreover, cooperatives do not have working capital. Therefore, they can only complete the payment to the producer once the saffron has been sold. However, for the vast majority of producers, saffron is used as life insurance: They sell it when they need money. Therefore, it is preferable to sell it at a lower price at the *souk* in Taliouine. In addition, farmers can only bring their saffron if their production is sold in advance. When there are only a few orders on the books, markets fluctuate and prices fall, farmers tend to retreat to the *souk*. As a result, only about 30% of producers are members of a cooperative and can benefit from the PDO. Cooperatives and the PDO are for farmers who can afford them.
- 10 However, it is difficult to build a geography out of uncertified productions. For farmers in the most remote places, like Tislit,¹² a village that is one of the poorest in the region, located at an altitude of 1,500 metres on a plateau overlooking the gorges (Figures 5 and 6) and accessible only by a track, the situation is generally more difficult than elsewhere. The inhabitants (about 20 families) shop only once a week – outside the village. Families live on subsistence farming. They produce some vegetables and almonds and have a few saffron fields (Figure 7). There is not enough water on the plateau, which makes it more difficult to grow saffron here than somewhere else. It is grown to a limited extent because it is harvested only once a year and takes up space that could be used for other crops. The rest of the time, nothing can be planted in the saffron plots. In addition, the harvest must be done within two weeks (the fragile pistils have to be picked as soon as they are ready) and, therefore, requires a great deal of work. None of the farmers in this village are members of a cooperative. They explain it by pointing to the fact that they are physically too far from the nearest cooperative, and that they do not know how to enter or open a cooperative.

Figure 5. Plateau overlooking the village of Tislit, October 2015



Photo M. Oiry.

Figure 6. The gorges of Tislit, October 2015



Photo M. Oiry.

Figure 7. A saffron field in Tislit, October 2015



Photo M. Oiry.

- 11 In the village of Ifri,¹³ only a few farmers belong to a cooperative. However, the village is less isolated: It sits close to the Taliouine–Tazenakht road and is a few kilometres from Taliouine. As in Tislit, social marginalisation explains the lack of certification: The farmers know that they would sell saffron for more through a cooperative (5 *dirhams* more than if they sold it to tourists directly, 10 *dirhams* more than if they sold it at the *souk*),¹⁴ but they cannot comply with the cooperative's constraints. This is also explained by the fact that the types of knowledge valued for the PDO and by cooperatives are not the same as those that the farmers have. Among others, there are strict requirements regarding hygiene, the choice of bulbs and irrigation with clean water, among others. Farmers frequently do not have the ability to adapt because they are often illiterate and there are too few training courses. The initial investment necessary to meet the requirements of the specifications is also too high. Finally, the difference between villages is explained by the presence (or absence) of mediating actors to fill these gaps. The villages included in the cooperative system are those where migrants invested in village associations established in the 1980s and 1990s under the leadership of MD in order to set up basic facilities. They have the financial investment capacity, as well as the ideas and skills to implement them because they have studied, and they have the right marketing networks.
- 12 For farmers, the fact that they cannot be part of a cooperative or receive a PDO label gives them the feeling that they are being neglected by the public authorities, despite representing the majority of saffron producers in the region. The ORMVAO has announced the implementation of drip systems, which would help when crocus flowers are growing in the summer. In Ifri, only the first phase of such a project has received funding, so the work has not been completed and the systems installed are not yet

operational. In Tislit, some people have heard about these drip systems but have not had access to them, and knowing that others are receiving support reinforces their own sense of exclusion.

The increase in territorial inequality

- 13 If certification increases social inequality, does it exacerbate the inequality between production areas? And on what scale? At the national level, there does not appear to be a stigmatisation of territories that have been excluded from the PDO area. Producers from Ourika benefit from international labels and marketing networks, which enables them to do without the PDO. The farms there are run by migrants returning to Morocco, Moroccan businessmen or academics who have the financial capital and networks to sell at higher prices. However, there is a risk of trivialising the labelled territory. Once again, it is the “big” producers and private companies that can stand out from the rest by packaging, making by-products (e.g. soap) or selling saffron in sectors with high added value, such as the pharmaceutical sector. Cooperatives and tourism stakeholders are also cognisant of the need to offer processed products, which may be sold at a higher price, but do so only on the fringes and without a collective strategy.
- 14 Territorial inequality is rising, especially at the regional level. The “Taliouine saffron” PDO covers the regions of Taliouine and of Tazenakht, which lies further east and has the largest cultivated area. However, it has far fewer cooperatives than the Taliouine region and, in the EIG of the House of Saffron, Tazenakht has only a few cooperatives, largely in the minority and more recent. This is due to the historical rivalries between the two territories. A Belgian pharmaceutical company established shortly before the last field surveys in October 2015 could change the situation. The quality supply needed for this niche is difficult to find in Taliouine, so the company is forced to work with producers in Tazenakht, who are also better able to produce saffron in large quantities. The balance of power is shifting and could lead to a rebalancing between the two territories.

Resisting labels and the models that produce marginality

Making do with/avoiding labels

- 15 Far from simply surrendering to the situation, the small farmers disadvantaged by the PDO label are trying to make do with it by selling directly to the tourists: This is possible on a seasonal basis in Tislit because the village is close to gorges that draw many visitors to the region (Figure 8). The hostel manager, who welcomes hikers on their way to visit the gorges, sells saffron produced in the village. More generally, small-scale farmers use personal, family and tribal ties to find marketing networks. A few find work as employees for a private company. Another solution is to leave: A migrant will send money to increase agricultural production or even for savings to join a cooperative and perhaps benefit from the PDO label.

Figure 8. Hikers in the gorges of Tislit, October 2015



Photo M. Oiry.

- 16 Since very recently, the development of agroecology has been regarded as a means of improving the general quality of agriculture in the region. The ATRACTAE (Agrarian Communities and Municipalities Together for Innovative Land Governance) project, financed mainly by the French Development Agency, is supported by MD in partnership with Terre et humanisme (an international NGO based in France) and Terre et humanisme Maroc, NGOs whose goal is to develop agroecological practices, particularly through training. The founders of the Morocco inédit association have played a key role in setting up this project: They have a detailed understanding of the territory, are used to working with MD and committed to building an associative network mobilised for agroecology in Morocco. They have also forged links between actors who had previously had few relationships with each other.¹⁵ The objective is to think about saffron and, more generally, about agriculture within the framework of a systemic vision – a territory project fleshed out following multi-stakeholder consultation that takes into account, in particular, so-called traditional management systems like *jmaa* (assemblies that bring together a village's lineage chiefs) and tribes, by starting from the observation that these “agrarian communities” do not have a legal existence at present but are efficient nevertheless. It is also a question of reversing the trend towards exclusively growing saffron, whereas, in recent years, large irrigated areas have been developed, particularly towards Tazenakht. The project aims to promote the cultivation of more than one crop so that farmers do not have to rely on a single source of income and in order to prevent the soil from being depleted. The basic agroecological training courses that have begun in the Siroua massif do not focus specifically on saffron cultivation. They can allow access to the PDO label or, on the contrary, bypass the label, even if it means applying for internationally recognised

organic labels. They can also diversify agricultural production or promote other “local products”, such as aromatic plants or almonds.

Reinventing farming knowledge as a counter-power

- 17 The types of agricultural knowledge that Landel and Thermes (forthcoming) identify in another context are central to the issues that this project raises. In this particular region, there are several competing types of knowledge: Local knowledge, which relates to “traditional” agriculture, is shared on farms and transmitted from one generation to the next on a daily basis. The agroecological project does not seek to idealise this local knowledge, which has been in decline for decades: Since the colonial period in the plains and since the 1970s in the mountains, the industrial knowledge that has been imposed (first by the colonisers and then by Moroccan authorities using agricultural engineers) has crushed local knowledge. This knowledge reflects the growing importance of Atlas agriculture in the greater global market. The market and the authorities exercise power over farming societies in the mountains by imposing generic industrial knowledge produced in the North, legitimised through colonisation and the neoliberal globalisation and standardised by the market. The project rejects the industrial knowledge that underlies saffron production in large irrigated areas, which is based on the supply of water and often also pesticides.¹⁶ The aim of agroecology training is to transmit types of knowledge that are considered as alternatives because they help to consume as little water as possible and not to use chemical inputs, thus respecting the ecosystem while enabling agricultural production that is acceptable in terms of quantity and quality. Delivered on-site, such training is tailored to each locality. The emergence of so-called territorialised agriculture through labelling processes is based on promoting local knowledge (although, as we have seen, it has partly disappeared in Taliouine) and, above all, on knowledge standardised by the specifications, on a model from elsewhere. The promotion of local products is done within the framework of a downward dynamic, which explains why it is incomplete. Thus, labelling makes it possible for the authorities to control the mountain areas and bring them to the market, again an operative knowledge-power system in the Foucauldian sense of the term. The agroecology training project goes against these types of knowledge, which are imposed by the label and standardise the actions taken by farmers to ensure that the product meets the expectations of national and international markets: types of agricultural knowledge that are not those of small farmers and are not accessible to them.
- 18 Agroecological knowledge combines the valorisation of existing local knowledge and the importing of knowledge tested by associative networks that campaign for agroecology in Morocco and France. One may be tempted to see in these tests the bricolage techniques so dear to Michel de Certeau, in this bricolage¹⁷ of tactics aimed at bypassing industrial know-how, forms of micro-resistance against the market logic. In the context of the training courses that are currently starting up, it remains to be seen how small farmers are really participating in the production of this knowledge. Over time, it will be necessary to study how, in their daily agricultural practices, they use them, whether or not they appropriate them, whether or not they divert them and whether they reverse a balance of power previously dominated by international authorities and networks.

Conclusion: between strengthening the balance of power and offering resistance

- 19 The case of saffron in Taliouine illustrates how Morocco's public authorities, following the NGOs' approach, are becoming more and more involved in marginalised areas through "local products" and their labelling. While local actors, agricultural cooperatives and tourist associations are struggling to take over because these dynamics have been pushed from the top, labelling strengthens the balance of power: It increases the small producers' social marginalisation, as well as their deference both to the actors who dominate the process and, ultimately, to the market. They have to deal with the arrival of private actors who are accelerating the speed at which the sector is becoming part of a global economy where cooperatives are not very powerful. Certification also increases small farmers' submissive posture towards the market logic that emphasises the importance of knowledge other than that of the small producers, which they must acquire but do not have the means to. From Taliouine's vantage point, the results of the Green Morocco Plan have been disappointing: It has done little to benefit small farmers, who make up most of the rural world. Following the global trend – that is, choosing the capitalist agricultural model – disqualifies them.
- 20 In response, small farmers are trying to circumvent labelling or make it a resource for their own tactics. The intervention of local actors who form part of agroecological networks could change the situation because they put agriculture – a major resource in the mountains of Morocco – at the centre, within the framework of a vision of the territory presented as being integrated. Will they succeed at inventing and transmitting agricultural knowledge that combines local and agroecological knowledge in order to offer a credible alternative to industrial knowledge and knowledge valued within labelled agriculture? Will they succeed at putting small farmers at the heart of the action, or will they implement yet another project led by international and national networks and not by or in coordination with local actors? The surge in the number of agroecological networks in Morocco can both enable small farmers to find ways to resist the market and the authorities' efforts at control and raise fears that the premises of an "agroecological transition" (Landel and Thermes, forthcoming) may only be another opportunity to disqualify them. Small farmers on the fringes in Morocco could pursue other avenues: In 2018, an organic label was created at the national level. It could be an alternative to obtaining international organic labels, which are too burdensome. Nevertheless, obtaining the latter, as is the case for labels based on geographical origin, does not mean producers are asked less in terms of adapting or of acquiring knowledge that they do not necessarily have. We can also look into the many labels in the European model and the uncertainty they might generate among consumers.

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NOTES

1. The protected designation of origin (PDO) and the protected geographical indication (PGI) have existed at the European level since 2012 and 2013, respectively, but many agricultural products were labelled as PDO in France long before that. For example, one Comté cheese received PDO recognition as far back as 1958.

2. Law no. 25-06 on the Distinctive Signs of Origin and Quality of Foodstuff and Agricultural and Fisheries Products, promulgated by *dahir* (decree) no. 1-08-56 of 23 May 2008.

3. For protected geographical indications (PGIs), only the raw material has to come from the production region. For example, for a type of argan oil to be certified as "Argan PGI", it is enough for the almonds to come from the Essaouira region, even though they can be transformed into oil and packaged outside this region.

4. In this article, I provide an account of the investigations I did during research for my doctoral dissertation, between 2008 and 2012, with regard to saffron and how it is promoted to tourists. The work here was carried out in 2015–2016 as part of the "Distinguishing mountain territories."

Critical approaches to labelling processes in territorial constructions” programme (Labex Innovation in mountain territories).

5. For a more precise presentation of the actors involved in the saffron recovery, see Oiry Varacca (2019).

6. Established in the Hautes Alpes in 1986 by migrants from Taliouine who had been dismissed from a heavy industry group that was undergoing restructuring, it produced basic equipment with the severance pay and then relied on saffron to develop the region economically.

7. Until the mid-1990s, saffron producers depended on intermediaries who bought saffron at a low price at the *souk* and contributed to most of the added value.

8. As an exhibition space and sales area for saffron, it will also showcase other local products in the future and centralise the region's tourist offers. It is managed by an EIG named *dar assafran*. The co-operators who are also members get to sell their saffron there. The House of Saffron only sells PDO-certified saffron. It relieves producers of the burdens of packaging and marketing and guarantees them a fixed selling price that is higher than at the *souk*.

9. Aziz Akhannouch became president of the Souss-Massa-Drâa region in 2003 and served in this function until his appointment as Minister of Agriculture in 2007.

10. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988), Michel de Certeau uses terms like “bricolage”, “poaching”, “ruse” and “tactic” to refer to the ways in which ordinary people borrow from various existing norms in order to build their own value system, open up play spaces for them to worm their way into the imposed order and, thereby, discreetly resist this order.

11. The first part of the article is essentially based on an analysis of these many reports, published between 2006 and 2018. The main ones are listed in the bibliography under the heading “reports”.

12. In this village in October 2015, interviews were conducted with producers and their families, the manager of the village's only hostel and tour guides with their groups staying at this hostel.

13. In Ifri, observations and surveys were carried out among saffron producers and members of the local association in June 2011 and, in a more systematic manner, in October 2015.

14. Saffron is sold for 25 *dirhams* per gram at the *souk*, for 30 *dirhams* directly to tourists and for 35 *dirhams* in cooperatives (these figures are approximate because they change from year to year).

15. With respect to this project, I rely primarily on interviews conducted in January 2018 and August 2019 with the head of Morocco inédit. These interviews will need to be complemented by a series of surveys with those who benefitted from the first rounds of training that recently took place.

16. It should be noted that, even outside large irrigated areas, many farmers in the region use pesticides for saffron cultivation.

17. Rather than the term “hybrid” knowledge used by Landel and Thermes (forthcoming), I prefer the term “bricolage”, which does not prejudge the distinct, chronological nature of the types of knowledge that are mobilised: They overlap in time instead of succeeding each other. Those currently in the Atlas can be described as “rhizomics” as per the meaning that Deleuze and Guattari (1976) ascribe to the term: They are networked, within the framework of networks that are more international and national than local, and they are essentially plural and comprise multiple sources of influence and inspiration.

ABSTRACTS

This article examines how agricultural products from marginalised mountain regions in Morocco manage to get labels. The country's public authorities present labelling as a new way of requalifying areas that have previously been left behind. They do this by recognising the areas' uniqueness and the quality of their certified products. However, this labelling can also exacerbate differences between spaces, revalue some, disqualify others, exclude certain actors and stir up conflicts. A critical reading of these labelling processes is offered here. Are these processes really capable of shrinking not only a particular space's marginality but also social inequality? The discussion focuses on the labelling of saffron from Taliouine, a region in southern Morocco that has long been neglected by the public authorities to such a degree that it is a land of emigration. The article considers how different representations of the territory and agricultural knowledge are negotiated through the labelling process. It analyses the perspectives of ordinary players: small farmers who view themselves as being excluded from the process. Beyond the tensions that are revealed and amplified by the labelling, this work shows the arrangements and ways of resisting that are found in order to "make do with" labelling and fight against marginalisation – sometimes without having a label.

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Keywords: inequality, knowledge, labelling, Morocco, power, protected designation of origin, saffron

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